

Message Text

SECRET

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15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 OMB-01 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03

SAM-01 SS-20 RSC-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00

L-03 PRS-01 DRC-01 /083 W
----- 075970

R 010345Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0179

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

CINCPAC

S E C R E T NOFORN SINGAPORE 0957

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, SN, IS

SUBJECT: STATUS OF ISRAELI MILITARY ADVISORY TEAM

REF: SINGAPORE 0776

1. ISRAELI AMBASSADOR ALMOG CALLED ON ME TODAY TO FILL ME IN ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING THE ISRAELI MILITARY ADVISORY TEAM.

2. HE SAID DECISION TO TERMINATE CONTRACT WITH ADVISORY TEAM WAS MADE BY PRIME MINISTER LEE, WHO APPRENTLY FELT ITS CONTINUED PRESENCE WAS AN EMBARRASSMENT VIS-A-VIS THE ARABS. AMBASSADOR MADE NO MENTION OF MALAYSIAN PRESSURE (REFTEL) AND IF, IN FACT, THAT HAD BEEN TOLD ISRAELI EMBASSY HERE IT WAS PROBABLY A SMOKESCREEN TO HIDE REAL GOS MOTIVATION. WHILE ORIGINALLY ALL ADVISORS WERE EXPECTED TO LEAVE, IT WAS LATER DECIDED TO KEEP FOUR

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ADVISORS IN SINGAPORE A BIT LONGER. IT APPEARS THAT THIS

REVERSAL CAME AFTER FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM HAD RETURNED FROM HIS MIDDLE EAST TRIP AND COUNSELLED AGAINST TAKING STEP WHICH WOULD INDICATE THAT GOS WAS YIELDING TO ARAB PRESSURES. DECISION NOT TO PUBLICIZE CONTRACT TERMINATION ALSO MADE ON GROUNDS PUBLICITY WOULD OVERLY DRAMATIZE EVENT AND WOULD LOOK LIKE GESTURE TO PLEASE ARABS.

3. ALMOG SAID THAT WORK OF ADVISORS HAD LARGELY BEEN COMPLETED AND THAT DECISION TO TERMINATE CONTRACT WILL HAVE NO REAL EFFECT SINCE, ACCORDING TO ISRAELI PLANS, ENTIRE GROUP WOULD PROBABLY HAVE LEFT BY MID-1974 IN ANY CASE. HE SAID THAT TALK OF CONTRACT EXTENDING INTO 1975 OR 76 WAS ERRONEOUS. (WE QUESTION THIS BECAUSE ISRAELI ADVISORS THEMSELVES TOLD DAO THAT THEY EXPECTED TO REMAIN UNTIL 1976 AND SENIOR ADVISOR WAS IN PROCESS BEING REPLACED AT TIME ALL THIS OCCURRED.)

4. FOUR ADVISORS ARE STAYING ON UNTIL MID-1974 AND THEIR STATUS, ACCORDING ALMOG, HAS NOT CHANGED. FIVE OTHERS WILL BE LEAVING IN MARCH. SOMETIME LATER, A MILITARY OFFICER WILL BE ASSIGNED IN CIVILIAN CAPACITY TO EMBASSY TO CARRY OUT LIAISON FUNCTION WITH MINDEF.

5. ALMOG SAID THAT RAJARATNAM HAD ASSURED HIM THAT AT NO TIME HAD GOS CONSIDERED BREAKING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. HE ALSO SAID GOH WILL WRITE LETTER OF APPRECIATION TO ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER AFTER LAST ADVISORS LEAVE AND PLAN IS THAT THIS LETTER WOULD BE RELEASED TO PRESS IN ISRAEL.

6. MAIN REASON ALMOG CALLED WAS TO ASK THAT WE TREAT THIS MATTER AS NORMAL AND EXPECTED PHASE-OUT OF THE ADVISORY TEAM AND THAT WE NOT GIVE IMPRESSION THAT GROUP BEING FORCED TO LEAVE. HE SAID BOTH GOS AND HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD FIND THIS EMBARRASSING. HE ALSO ASKED THAT IN ANY MEETINGS WITH DR. GOH, RAJARATNAM OR PM I MENTION THAT USG BELIEVES ADVISORS MADE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT OF SINGAPORE'S ARMED FORCES AND THAT WE WELCOMED THEIR PRESENCE HERE.

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7. COMMENT: I WAS NONCOMMITTAL ON THIS LAST POINT AND SEE NO REASON WHY WE SHOULD INVOLVE OURSELVES IN THIS WAY. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHAT MOTIVATES THIS REQUEST, BUT I GOT IMPRESSION HE MADE SUGGESTION ON INSTRUCTIONS.
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